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ABSTRACT

After World War II, an optimistic, rationalist ideology infused with Jeffersonian values influenced worldwide educational growth. The idea of a universal, free, compulsory system replaced an older elitist ideology. The equality ideology held that (1) cultural integration was necessary for national unity and (2) a shortage of trained manpower was the major obstacle to growth and modernism. Faith in education's power to create the necessary human capital for growth encouraged developed countries to expand their secondary and tertiary systems and developing countries to create all three levels in one or two decades. By 1970, the narrow view of economic development as sufficent to alleviate poverty yielded to a broader expectation that educational expansion would produce more social equality, partly through increased job opportunities and income equalities. However, the linear growth in jobs and capital accumulation ceased by the early 1970s; these and other economic disasters of the 1980s reduced education budgets and retarded progress toward universal schooling. The 1980s ideology essentially abandoned the equality emphasis to concentrate on improving educational quality. Although influenced by economic thinking, the quality approach is a mirror opposite of the 1960s optimistic model, being heavy with doubt and founded in disappointment and uncertainty. Yet, the concept stresses the relationship between investment of educational resources and productivity. Except for four East Asian nations, the linkage between schooling and economic growth in developing countries is weakening. Despite growing expenses, qualitative reform is as important as increased educational access for developing countries. Included are 25 references. (MLH)

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THE CHANGING IDEOLOGY OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM:

EQUALITY YIELDS TO QUALITY

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THE CHANGING IDEOLOGY OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM:

EQUALITY YIELDS TO QUALITY

Introduction: The Expectation and the Reality

Idealistic optimism of the Post-World War II period, which viewed education as a social pallative, stimulated the explosive growth of schooling in developed and developing countries. It was a rationalist ideology which became two-fold in the 1950's and 1960's and influenced rapid world-wide educational growth. It replaced an older ideology of small, elitist schooling.

Immediately after the war, the Jeffersonian-progressive portion of the ideology was dominant. The promise of the ideology was that democratic ideals would be enhanced and secured by the building of a universal free, compulsory system with at least six grades for all youth. The ideology held that equality of access to political, economic and social participation was only possible if universal education were put in place. This ideology motivated new countries and older developing countries to create large new school systems, even if most countries did not color their systems progressive. The ideology of equality in many countries held that integration of all cultural groups was necessary if the nation were to be truly united. By providing exposure to common values, historical allegories and language, the necessary conditions for establishing and maintaining a democracy could be present. In some new as well as older developing countries a cultural imperialism developed, because the culture of the core or capital area became the national ideal. The ideology of equality in such countries promoted one cultural-linguistic ideal.

The second aspect of the ideology was the promise of human capital, which became nearly universal in the early 1960's. Education and training accounted for a great deal of the growth in human capital since World War II in developed

countries (Schultz, 1961). Shortages of trained manpower were the major obstacles to economic growth and modernism (Harbison and Meyers, 1964), and a new and even greater impetus for educational growth appeared. Faith in the power of education to create the human capital necessary for growth encouraged developed countries to expand their secondary and tertiary systems, and developing countries to create all three in a decade or two. A complex interaction between the two ideological elements took root in some countries. In others the emphasis on the economic development goal superseded all others. Education for economic development first and for social development second became the main rationale for investment in schooling in developing countries. Todaro (1985, p. 84) states: "Rapid gains in per capita GNP growth would either 'trickle down' to the masses in the form of jobs and other economic opportunities or create the necessary conditions for the wider distribution of economic and social benefits of growth."

By 1970 it was clear that something was wrong with the narrow view of economic development as the sufficient condition for alleviating the poverty of the masses. An interaction between the equality and economic development ideologies in the 1970's forged the expectation that expansion of schooling would lead to more social equality. This would occur, because the resulting economic development would create opportunities in the modern economic sector for so many people that the income inequalities would be reduced. Developed countries had lower Gini coefficients than developing countries. So, it followed that the more schooling, the more economic development, and the more income equality would result.

Developing countries are characterized by an economic dualism, i.e., the presence of traditional and modern economic sectors. The traditional sector includes subsistence agriculture and small commercial enterprises such as food stands, market stalls and craftsmen working in their homes. This sector is considered by economists to be inefficient, relatively unproductive in monetary terms, and lacking

in promise for mechanization (Hallak and Caillods, 1981). It requires less schooled labor and depends upon particularistic relationships instead of management in the modern, specialized sense. By contrast, in order to enter the modern sector one must have some kind of formal education, and the amount of education keeps escalating as the literacy level of the population rises and the amount of mechanization and work technology is modernized.

Schooling is designed for moving people into the modern sector. School system professionals neither know how to nor wish to design curricula to prepare people for the traditional sector. One goal of education for development was to get people out of the traditional or village economy and into the modern economy. As the modern sector absorbed larger proportions of the economically active population, the ideology held that the society would benefit from the growth of rationalization in the political life of the country. Presumably schooled people would exercise political choices much as they exercised consumer choices.

The combination of factors which damaged the ideology of schooling which leads to economic development and income equality were complex and interactive. Their impact caused an erosion of the optimistic ideology, or a complete revision of the notions of the 1960's and 70's. The linear growth in jobs and capital accumulation envisioned in the human capital ideology ceased by the early 1970's. The large new capital projects required only a few workers in the countries where there was a surplus of labor. This surplus grew uncontrollably as the rural poor migrated to become the urban poor. As the economic growth of the world slowed in the early 1970's, and even further in the 1980's, the prices for prime exports of the developing countries fell while the prices of technology and oil kept rising. When relief came in the form of lower oil prices, the developing countries were hit with impossibly high interest rates on the loans which they had contracted to put in place those efficient capital projects which employed so few people. Their

weakening currencies kept petroleum prices high. In many developing countries the traditional small farming sector suffered irreparable damage from high prices for technology and petroleum-based products, falling commodity prices and the impossibility of obtaining credit.

The promise of rising income equality disappeared with economic disasters (Tilak, 1982). The gap between developed and developing countries widened strikingly. Latin America and Sub-Sahara Africa have suffered the greatest economic dislocations, and are falling farthest behind developed countries, while the Arab oil producing countries and East Asian countries have narrowed the wealth gap between themselves and the developed countries. The gap between rich and poor within countries was to have narrowed. In some of the developing countries in which economic growth has been greatest, such as Brazil, Mexico, Columbia, and Venezuela, the poor have become even more disadvantaged (Todaro, 1985). The widening gap has created a regression to a faith in the ideology of the 1960's.

The effects of the economic disasters fell heavily upon education budgets. Developing and developed countries alike reduced the proportions of their budgets for education, with some notable exceptions (Psacharopoulos, 1986). In the United States the percentage of the GNP for education was reduced in the late 1970's and 1980's (UNESCO, 1985). In developing countries, the proportions of GNP and public expenditures dropped so greatly after 1978 that it was clear that those countries had abandoned the targets of providing public primary schools for everyone and of expanding secondary and tertiary education to accommodate more of the underclass. This would not have happened, however, if policy makers were not convinced that education systems simply could not be expanded at the rates prevalent in the 1960's. The reduction of the proportion of GNP and public expenditures for education became politically possible for policy makers in the 1980's because of the following:

1. School systems became much more expensive to run as inflation went out of control. Teacher unions were able to put in place fixed costs for salaries, which constituted all but a tiny portion of the budgets.

2. Growth of the costs for secondary and tertiary education in developing countries left primary education a poor stepchild. Planners in the 1960's wanted to put in place all the pieces of an educational system, but few realized how much more expensive the post-primary segments of the system would be. Further, the public primary system was attended by the least powerful, the rural and urban poor. The post-primary portions of the system consumed many resources because of the demands of the urban middle-class.

3. Private schools became more than ever the refuge of those able to afford them, simply because of the widespread recognition that the graduates of those schools entered secondary and tertiary institutions and got the better jobs after schooling. In most countries these schools outperformed public schools in achievement. An added attraction of private schools in Latin America was the politicization of the public secondary and tertiary institutions which de-stablized them.

4. High drop-out and retention rates, as well as low achievement in the basic skills signalled high rates of inefficiency and low rates of effectiveness. The resources needed to put one person through primary school in countries such as Haiti, Paraguay or a sub-Sahara country were relatively high for those countries' economies (UNESCO, 1985). Such wastage became a reason to reexamine the premises of universal public education in many countries.

5. Inequalities in each society were mirrored in the schools. Lower participation by females, rural poor, or ethnic minorities brought into question the power of a country's school system to serve as an impetus of equality.

6. The curriculum of the public schools was unrealistic for preparing students to participate effectively in the modern economy. The schools not only offered irrelevant curricula, but offered it mainly by memorization only. Hence, the schools had little to offer students or the economy because the curricula had so little relationship to the world of work.

The New Ideology: The Call for Reform of School Quality

The ideology of the 1980's rests upon the realization of all the foregoing. Briefly put, it was time to abandon the quest for expanding the quantity of or access to schooling, and to concentrate on improving its quality. By doing so, it was believed, children of the marginal populations would be no worse off than in a system in which many did not enter anyway, or if they did, their chances of remaining until completion of the first level were slim. If the quality of the schools improved, their chances of completing the primary cycle would be improved considerably, and the effectiveness of the schools would improve greatly.

The newest ideology is heavily influenced by the thinking of economists, as was the earlier model. In most respects, it is a mirror opposite of the 1960's model. The earlier ideology was one of optimism, the newer one is heavy with doubt and founded in disappointment (Weiler, 1978). Doubts permeate the new ideology; doubt about the efficacy of schooling, doubt about its relationship to economic growth, and doubt about the possibility of economic or social development goals being met anytime in the predictable future even if the advice of the planners and economists is followed. There is pessimism about the direction or amount of wider public participation in political life and economic life. There is even pessimism that developing countries will reach any kind of improvement in social or economic conditions within the near future.

The outline of the 1980's ideology is much more complex than earlier. It consists of interdependent parts which require developing countries to make

difficult decisions about access and instructional process. The following characteristics of the ideology are presented in a brief and overly-simplified manner, but the authors believe they represent the ideology accurately.

First, improvement of school quality is of the greatest importance, and it now supersedes enlarging educational access as the most important item on the agenda of educational reform. This is dogma across the world, in socialist as well as free-market countries, in developed as well as developing countries. The rationale for this in developing countries in part is the belief that school quality has a much greater effect on student test scores in developing countries than in the United States (Solomon, 1986). Will this policy hurt some people's chances for schooling? Solomon believes: "Improvements in the quality of schooling provided in developing countries may be more important for the future economic prospects of these nations in the long run than will expanded access to poor quality education" (p. 14). Will delaying schooling access to many low income people while the quality of existing schooling is improved raise the productive capacity of the schooled or the social condition of the country making that choice? Again, Solomon: "If the gains in productive capacity by those whose quality of education has improved are greater than the losses in productivity of those whose educational quality has declined, then society has become better off. But we will not know the net effects of the tradeoff between quality and equity until such determinations are made" (pp. 13-14).

Second, schooling should be analyzed in terms of its productivity or outcomes. Fuller (1985) has presented a complex analysis of performance of school systems in developing countries, using achievement as a criterion variable. Earlier work of that kind was done by IEA (Heyneman and Loxley, 1983; Carnoy, 1971; Schiefelbein and Farrel, 1973; and Heyneman, 1976). Their work uses student cognitive attainment as the measure of quality. While some scholars have examined

the results of schooling in developing countries with respect to the formation of social attitudes or social behavior, such work has not been summarized across a large number of countries. The work of Almond and Verba (1963) has not been replicated, partly because of the difficulty in using operational measures which have predictive validity, and partly because policy makers would probably not express interest in attitudinal outcomes of schooling.

Third, investment of resources in education should be related to productivity or outcomes of some kind. The subtitle to Fuller's 1985 work is "What Investments Boost Learning?" There is a strong theme in the ideology that before much additional money is appropriated for schooling, there must first be a study of how to use existing money to boost efficiency and effectiveness.

Fourth, heavy public subsidies to higher education must be reduced, partly in the name of equity, because most recipients of such expenditures are in favored socio-economic classes who can afford to share more of the costs themselves (Psacharopoulos, 1986). There is a mystique about the financing of higher education which has not yet been unveiled. There are early warning signs that higher education is far more inefficient than suspected. But the reform of higher education finance is much more difficult than that of public basic education, simply because the clients of the former are immeasurably more powerful than the clients of public primary education in developing countries (Tilak, 1982). What this implies for policy is that public basic education, especially primary, will continue to be the target of opportunity for cost analysis and restructuring.

Fifth, the private education sector at all levels must be encouraged to assume more importance because of its apparent superiority in efficiency and effectiveness (Psacharopoulos, 1985). Yet, no discussion or data are yet apparent on the efficiency or effectiveness of private schools which admit larger numbers of students from poorer classes. Also, there is increased research interest on the desirability

of increasing costs to families of public primary and secondary students, with the argument that increased parental costs may have the effects of improving access to schools and improving their quality because the public would insist on better instruction (Thobani, 1984).

Sixth, vocational education is now widely viewed as being too expensive to justify the much heavier investments than academic secondary education. There are indications that graduates of the much cheaper academic streams are as apt to be productive in agriculture and industry as are the vocational school graduates. The rate of return studies have illuminated this issue (Psacharopoulos, 1985). The same is applicable to the return on specialized programs in higher education versus general academic programs.

The Quest for Quality: The Promise and the Illusion

There is less emphasis on equality in the newer ideology. One does not read about the desirability of bridging the gap in educational opportunity across rural and urban areas or for sexes in many countries. Those who are not served are left to wait their turn for a distant opportunity, because conditions are overcrowded.

There is a surprising lack of attention in this ideology to the goals or values of countries which must make tough public policy choices between equity and school quality. The agenda of reform is described in concrete form, but the discussions do not proceed from a base of how public policy is made. The arguments are clearly described following an analysis of the pathology of the economic and school conditions, but there are flaws in the arguments, as well as a lack of attention to the nature of public policy making. The prescriptions for reform appear to be technical in nature, and ignore the political process of reform. That these arguments for reform constitute an ideology may not be recognized by the reformers, but since the body of reform doctrine has such momentous implications

for the social and cultural fabrics of the affected countries, the values implicit in the prescribed reform agenda must be identified in order to justify its consideration. The proposed agenda of reform would appear to the technicians who recommend it as marginal, but their potential social impact is so far-reaching as to impose the continued acceptance of massive poverty and non-participation for a large percentage of people. The values on which the ideology is based must be identified so that the risks to the various publics and to the nature of the political process can be seen and debated within the country which considers the reform.

In the world economic system, capital moves to the countries which are the most attractive hosts. Since a prime objective of a developing county is to attract capital to stimulate growth, the arguments for measures which attract capital are of high priority. The ideology of the 1980's requires public spending to be reined in. This helps to keep inflation in check, but for debt-burdened countries it also projects the image to external lenders of tough controls over expenditures. If one observes the economic activity indices in countries such as Guatemala and Costa Rica, one is struck by the interactive trends of lower real income, falling currency values, high external interest payments to pay for the previous capital sector investments, and strenuous attempts to raise exports even while their value is falling, along with lower per capita public expenditures during the 1980's (Inter-American Development Bank, 1986).

Fighting to keep an economy viable in the world system in the new ideology means to keep public education costs down. The belief is that attractiveness to external investors depends mainly upon slimming down expenditures and keeping the dept interest paid, while maintaining free market conditions. But to what extent will slimming down expenditures for education create attractive conditions for external investors? Might not some unfavorable effects of the slimming of education budgets be unattractive to outside capital?

The ideology does not address conditions of public participation and the threat to political stability from a sizeable layer of unemployed and uneducated who must wait to share in public benefits. Will these people be so convinced by the rhetoric of "fiscal responsibility", or so powerless that they will not push for their own needs in the public budgets? There is also an expectation that the declining importance of public sector will be accompanied by private growth which will take care of the marginal people. Furthermore, private modern sector growth is expected to absorb the poor into the job demands created by the expansion of the free market before their unrest destroys a government which is committed to the free market.

A striking change has taken place in the view of the linkage between schooling and economic growth in developing countries. The linkage of the economy in non-socialist countries has been a loose one, but the dismal experience of developing countries in attempting to estimate their manpower needs and relate them to schooling, as well as the "overproduction of schooling" phenomenon have weakened the belief in the linkage. The view of schooling as instrumental for growth has not been abandoned in the 1980's, but the view of the linkage is now much more selective and focused. Some schooling is seen as necessary for some people for some kinds of tasks. Widespread but not universal primary schooling is seen as necessary to keep a country's reservoir of skills high enough to keep a modern economy afloat. A growing modern economy in developing countries does not mean that more investment brings many more jobs, but instead brings a few more jobs that require high skill levels. That leaves large numbers of people who will apparently be left to low paying jobs in the traditional sector. The conditions for attracting capital are identified by free market experts to be minimal government controls, low taxes and wages and no barriers to capital. Apparently, these conditions have been satisfied in some East Asian countries. But are these

conditions accompanied by falling investments in education and an indifference to mass education? Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and Thailand have been among the few countries to resist the world-wide trend toward economic instability, and to improve their economic conditions. The proportions of their public budgets and GNP allotted to education have increased in the 1980's (UNESCO, 1985). High proportions of their citizenry are in command of literacy and numeracy skills. From these cases it appears that cutting back on educational expenditures may not be a good strategy for economic development. Many other factors affect the complex relationships of development and education so that it is necessary to look at country cases if one wishes to identify variables in interaction which are associated with economic development.

An interesting example is Taiwan. It is a country with a tight linkage between economic and educational planning. In its Four-Year Development Plan for the years 1982-1985, it identified price stability, sustained economic growth, adequate job opportunities, equitable income distribution, and balanced regional development as plan targets (Council for Economic Planning and Development Executive Yuan, 1981). Major strategies included the strengthening of research and development for advanced technologies, readjusting university programs to develop high-caliber manpower, expanding vocational training programs, improving employment security, instituting tax reform, and improving social welfare. The relationship between improving the education sector and the improvement of living standards is apparent in this list.

Other East Asian countries mentioned above share certain characteristics with Taiwan. In all of them there is a deep commitment to the value of education for everyone. These countries have made that commitment in part so that their economies can become even more competitive and so that universal participation in their economies can be realized. The Gini coefficients show these countries to have

less inequality than other developing countries (Todaro, 1985) in spite of the presence of traditional economies which range from large in Thailand to small in Taiwan. In these countries economic development and educational development have both been emphasized. In none of these countries, however, has a trade-off been accepted between delaying universal primary education and improving the quality of schooling. In each quality reform has been in the form of allotted resources as part of national educational planning.

All three countries have worked hard and creatively on the development of the economy as a sector which made special demands on public policy. They related the growth of the education sector to the economic sector. The national planning evident in these countries does not appear to be haphazard or segmented, but rather continuous, attracting major resources of talent with serious and sustained effort going into the enterprise. Each country's school system is organized with clear points or levels of achievement accountability. Their cultures all support a strenuous effort in schools by teachers and students with parents reinforcing that effort at home with even more effort. Is there a relationship between heightened income equality, more rapid economic development and universal efficient education? If so, the new ideology fails to explain it, nor does the human capital ideology suffice to address it.

The improvement of quality of schools must be a high priority item on the agenda of any country which wishes to develop economically or socially. Inefficient schools make it less likely that all people can participate politically or economically. From the standpoint of equity, inefficient and ineffective schools penalize the marginal people. Inefficient schools are an expensive burden in a developing nation. They perpetuate habits of mental dependency and rigidity in a world economy which rewards the faster-moving, resilient, more experimental people.

Reform of schools is overdue and cannot be delayed for any country which attempts to expand its economic sectors, to modernize the economy, or to promote participation in its economy and polity. What appears to be a trade-off between equality and quality is really a selection of an either-or dilemma. The key policy question in this discussion is whether there has to be a choice between expanded access or improvement of quality. The more costly budget choice appears in the 1980's ideology to be expanded access to more classrooms, while the less costly budget choice is perceived to be improvement of quality. More classrooms with the same kind of teaching and content is clearly a bad choice, while no new classrooms accompanied by improved quality is not necessarily a good choice for promoting the participation of more people in the economy and polity. Can a developing country afford both? There are indications that the East Asian countries mentioned above are attempting to do so and developed countries are doing so to some extent.

Quality improvement is a much more difficult technical problem than expansion of schooling. The new ideology is unrealistic in its apparent expectation that qualitative improvement will be cheaper than expansion of the system as is. The task of improving quality is, as any excellent teacher, supervisor, administrator, or scholars such as Miles and Huberman (1984) attest, one of changing teacher behavior. The task of reform is difficult and takes a long time, even with plenty of push at the top in centralized ministry countries as Hanson (1986) so ably shows. The research on learning and organization of schools provides ample directions for qualitative reform (Good and Brophy, 1986). Given a will to apply that research, only the bravest and most powerfully prepared go into the fray of quality improvement with even the slightest possibility of success. Qualitative reform must start at the top with policy change, but real qualitative improvement takes several years to affect the classroom level. Massive amounts of time and money for retaining and

supervision of the retrained people are required. In cases such as Botswana (Marope, 1987) there is evidence that after six years of work there is now just beginning to be some signs of change at the classroom level in certain schools. The same is true in Brasil (Moraes, 1986).

The costs of qualitative reform are going to be at least as high as expansion of the system as it exists. The point of this discussion is not that reform is too expensive to try but that it is not cheap. It is in no way marginal to the system as an organizational task but goes to the heart of what schools, teaching, and student roles are all about. The direction of qualitative reform depends upon what a country wants to have its school system do for it. There is a large menu of possible reforms. The graduates of an excellent school not only offer a higher rate of return to their country and themselves, but carry within them the seeds of social reform which a country's policy makers may not desire. Witness what students have done in the Philippines and South Korea in 1986. Once developing countries' policy makers see how tough qualitative reform is, some of them may be discouraged by teachers' or supervisors' resistance. The most dangerous choice for any country is to cut back on access to education and to delay qualitative reform. Any country which has chosen the path of development must continue to expand access to schooling, because the ultimate consequences of turning back from the goal of universal access to schooling will be both economic and political disaster. The path of qualitative reform is necessary, but it is one which requires deliberation and a type of planning for which many countries are not yet prepared. Yet, they must begin that stage soon, which to paraphrase Churchill, is the "end of the beginning" of the stage of mass schooling.

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